

# Lice Aren't Nice!

## A Head Lice Prevention and Treatment Booklet



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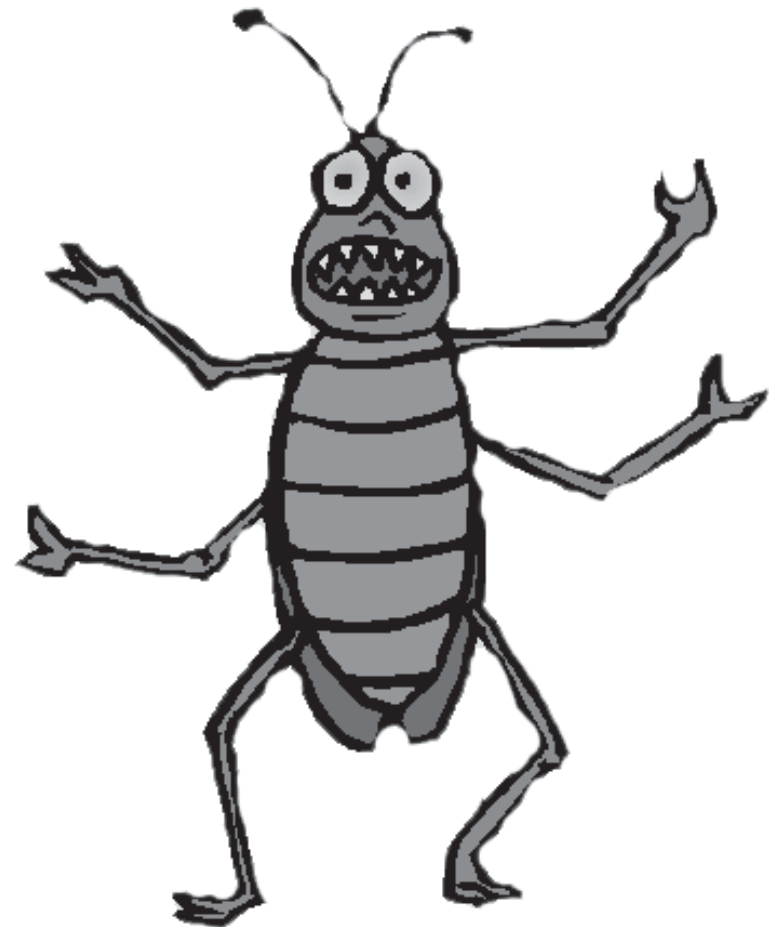
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**Written by:**

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## Lice Aren't Nice!

Dear Parents:

We understand that head lice is a difficult and frustrating problem for you and your family.

It is important to remember to:

- Be kind to yourself and your children.
- Reassure your children that they are loved and they are not the cause of this common problem.

Best Wishes!

The Lice Aren't Nice Community Coalition



Send 'em packin'!

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# Community Endorsements

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Community Health Centers of Snohomish County

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)/  
Snohomish County Human Services Department

Edmonds Community College/Snohomish County Head Start

The Everett Clinic

Everett School District

Marysville Family Medicine

Marysville School District

Medalia HealthCare

Medalia at Silver Lake Providence Health Care Clinic

Providence General Medical Center,  
Department of Family Practice

Region 3 Office of Child Care Policy,  
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Snohomish County Medical Society

Snohomish County Pharmacy Association

Snohomish Health District

Washington Academy of Family Physicians

**Thank you for your support!!**

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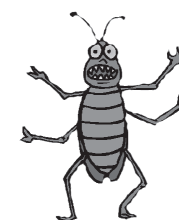
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# The world of lice and nits

When a person in your family gets head lice, your life can get a little crazy.

Crazier than it is right now!

But the more you know about lice prevention and treatment, the better off you and everyone else will be!



The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with the most current information about head lice. It has been gathered by the Lice Aren't Nice Community Coalition (LANCC) and was reviewed by the Snohomish Health District.

Because information about head lice treatments changes over time, the following recommendations have been based on treatments the LANCC found to be the most effective for the majority of our community at this time. There are no guarantees that these treatments will be 100% effective; data from clinical trials are not available for all treatment options in this booklet.

The LANCC does not assume responsibility for the outcome of your treatment.



## The life cycle of lice

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- ❖ An adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed.
- ❖ When a female louse finds its way onto the head of a person, she starts laying eggs, or **nits**, along with a glue that firmly attaches the nits to the hair close to the scalp. An adult female can deposit 6 to 8 nits in 2 days!
- ❖ In a week or so, the nits hatch, and the newborn lice take their first meal of blood from the person's head.
- ❖ It takes about 10 days for a newborn louse to become an adult.
- ❖ Once an adult, the female louse can start laying eggs. This means it only takes 16 days for an egg (nit) to become a female louse capable of laying more eggs!
- ❖ Adult lice live for 9-10 days, making the total life-span of a louse from egg to adult about 25 days.

## People you can contact for additional help

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- ❖ Your child's school nurse
- ❖ Your health care provider
- ❖ Lice Aren't Nice Community Coalition in care of the Snohomish Health District (425)339-5230
- ❖ National Pediculosis Association on the web at: [www.headlice.org](http://www.headlice.org) or call: 1(888)542-3634
- ❖ American Head Lice Information Center on the web at: [www.headliceinfo.com](http://www.headliceinfo.com) or call: 1(888)343-5423

## What is The Lice Aren't Nice Community Coalition?

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The Lice Aren't Nice Community Coalition (LANCC) is a group of concerned parents, educators, health professionals, day care providers, and social service agencies working together to educate the community about the prevention and treatment of head lice infestation in Snohomish County.

The goal of the LANCC is to ensure cooperation about head lice treatment and prevention among all those individuals and institutions who are affected by head lice infestation.

If you would like more information about the Lice Aren't Nice Community Coalition, or to **join** the coalition in their fight against head lice in Snohomish County, please contact us at (425)339-5230.

## Product information

**Check your local stores for product availability.**

LiceMeister™ comb (\$10-\$12)

- ✓ Albertson's pharmacies
- ✓ Select QFC's

LiceOut™ (\$4) with LiceOut™ comb (\$15)

- ✓ Bartell Drug Stores
- ✓ Fred Meyer Stores
- ✓ For more product information call:  
Walmed 1(800)759-7883

HairClean 1-2-3™

- ✓ Available at select pharmacies and health food stores
- ✓ For availability and price call:  
Quantum, Inc. 1(800)448-1448

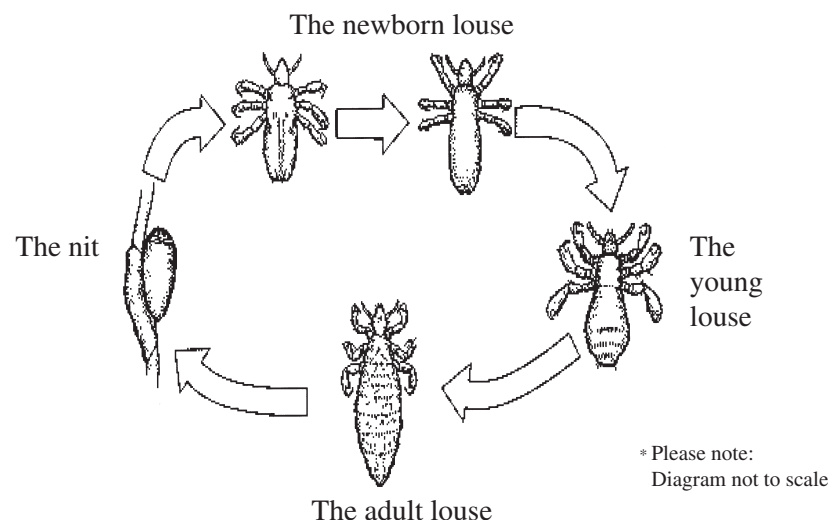
Pesticides (such as: Rid® and Nix®) (\$8-\$20)

- ✓ Any grocery store or pharmacy

### **Shampoos without conditioners:**

- ❖ Johnson® Baby Shampoo
- ❖ Neutrogena® Anti-Residue Shampoo
- ❖ Salon Selectives®, Level 7® Shampoo
- ❖ Ivory® Shampoo
- ❖ Prell® for Normal or Oily Hair Shampoo

The Lice Aren't Nice Community Coalition does not endorse or promote any of the products mentioned in this booklet. Details are provided for your information only!



## How lice spread

**Lice spread from person to person when people are in close contact or when they share clothing or personal items that have been in contact with the head or neck.**

### ***Remember...***

- ❖ Lice don't fly or jump; they crawl.
- ❖ Lice can infest **anyone...** young, old, rich, poor, clean or dirty.
- ❖ Avoid sharing personal items such as hats, coats, brushes, combs, and pillows.

# How to prevent head lice

- ❖ Perform weekly head checks to look for lice and nits. Lice and nits are very small, so use a bright light and/or a magnifying glass when checking for them. Outdoor light is best.
- ❖ Avoid sharing personal items such as hats, coats, brushes, combs, hair accessories (barrettes or scrunchies), and pillows.
- ❖ If your child is scratching his/her head more than usual, this is a warning sign. Check for lice and nits!
- ❖ Keep long hair in a braid or ponytail.
- ❖ Everyone in your home needs to take part in head checks as a part of their weekly personal hygiene routine.
- ❖ Encourage your school, child care, youth groups and PTAs to have lice prevention and treatment training every year.



## Things to vacuum:

- ☐ Rugs and carpets
- ☐ Car seats
- ☐ Chairs and couches
- ☐ Pillows from a couch or bed (wash the pillowcases)
- ☐ Bed mattresses
- ☐ Stuffed animals in contact with head and neck



## Another cleaning option:

Items exposed to lice, such as stuffed animals, can be placed in a plastic bag and closed tightly for two weeks. During these two weeks the lice and nits will not have food (blood) and will die.



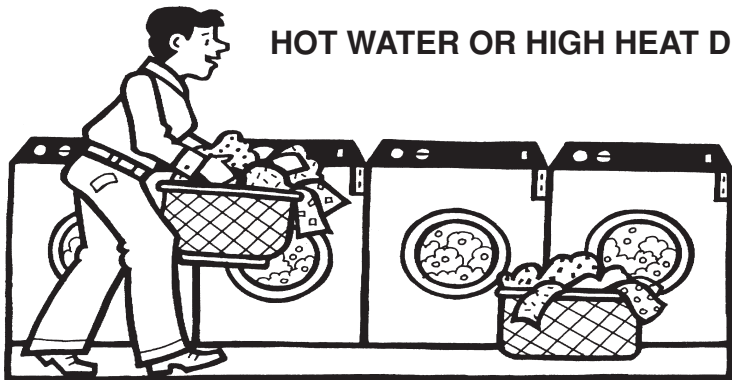
### Things to wash in a washing machine:

- ☐ Bath towels
- ☐ Coats
- ☐ Washable rugs
- ☐ Hats and scarves
- ☐ Sheets, blankets, and pillow cases

*Wash items using very hot water **or** dry items in the dryer using **high heat** for 30 minutes. The heat will help kill the lice and nits.*

#### REMEMBER!

**HOT WATER OR HIGH HEAT DRYER**



### Things to sanitize:

- ☐ Brushes, combs, and special nit loosening combs
- ☐ Barrettes, other hair holders
- ☐ Detachable foam pads inside bike and sport helmets

*To sanitize these items, soak the item in 1/4 cup bleach to 1 quart cold water for one hour.*

## Are they nits or just dandruff?

**Some people confuse nits with dandruff. Here are a few pointers to help you identify nits:**

- ❖ Nits are hard to remove from your hair.
- ❖ Nits feel like little grains of sand stuck to the hair, so you may feel them before you see them!
- ❖ Dandruff can be easily flicked away with your finger. **NITS CAN'T!**
- ❖ Nits are tiny and yellowish-white, and sometimes gray. Dandruff is larger and white.



## 3 step head check!

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A thorough head check is very important in the prevention and control of head lice. It takes more than a quick look at someone's head to see lice and/or nits. It takes time, patience, and good lighting. Here are three tips for a successful head check.

### 1. Check the entire head

Lice like to lay their eggs behind the ears, on the back of the head above the neck, and on the top of the head. But you might find adult lice anywhere on the head.

### 2. Use a nit removing comb each time you do a head check

Wet the hair with water and then use a special fine tooth comb, such as the LiceOut™ comb or the LiceMeister™ comb. See page 24 for product information. After combing, check the comb for loose head lice and nits. If you see any nits, be sure to turn to pages 10 and 11 to find out how to nit pick.

### 3. Check for head lice once a week

Make head checks a part of your family's personal hygiene routine. Fridays are a good day for head checks. If you find lice, you can start treating over the weekend and your children can avoid missing school.

## Cleaning household items to get rid of the lice

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When your child has lice you must complete the nit picking process before you spend time and energy cleaning your home.

Reinfestation of lice *usually* does not come from household items such as carpets or furniture. For some chronic cases, intense cleaning may be necessary. See the following pages for tips on cleaning.

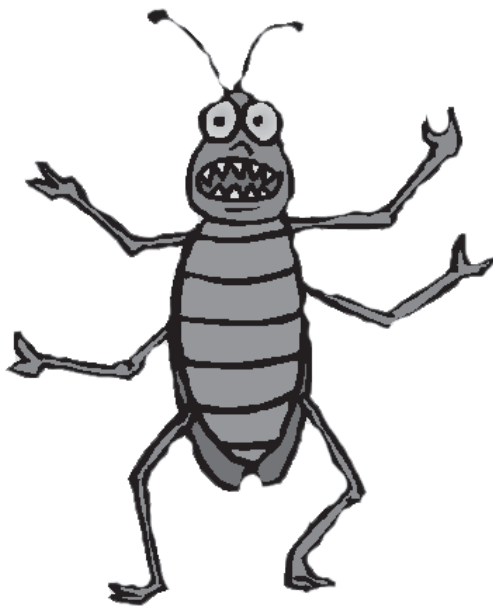
### Remember...

- ❖ Off the head, adult lice usually cannot survive for more than a day or two. Nits off the hair will die within hours of hatching if they can't find a meal. So, there is no point in cleaning every nook and cranny.
- ❖ Pets **do not** carry human head lice. They do not need any special cleaning.
- ❖ Evidence shows that lice sprays are not effective in killing lice or nits. They only put poisons into the air. Save your money and avoid buying lice sprays.

## Lindane

Lindane is a shampoo that is available only by a prescription. Over use or misuse of this product can be toxic to the brain and nervous system. Lice are not as easily killed by Lindane as they use to be.\* Always carefully follow the instructions on any head lice treatment product.

Both the American Head Lice Information Center and the National Pediculosis Association discourage the use of Lindane to treat head lice for anyone due to its high toxicity and potentially serious side effects.



\* Washington State Department of Ecology: Ecology Publication #97-423  
Integrated Pest Management in School Project

## Head lice treatment options

The treatment of head lice is a long process that can take up to 21 days. What follows is the most current and accurate treatment information available.

To get rid of head lice you must do two things; kill the live lice on the head, and remove all the nits from the hair. If lice show up again after you treat, it is usually because nits or newly hatched lice were not removed. This happens often because some of the lice are so small they can only be seen under a microscope.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY  
IN LICE TREATMENT IS  
NIT PICKING.  
IF YOU DO NOT PICK NITS REGULARLY,  
NOTHING ELSE  
YOU DO WILL WORK!**

**So . . . don't panic!**  
Take a deep breath and read on!

# How to pick nits in 12 easy steps!

## What you will need (for each person):

- ☐ One sheet or large towel
- ☐ Two towels or hair dryer
- ☐ A sink to wash hair in
- ☐ One regular tooth comb
- ☐ Hair clips
- ☐ One nit comb (LiceMeister™ or LiceOut™ comb)
- ☐ Tissue (paper towels or toilet paper)
- ☐ Good lighting (a magnifying glass if you have one)

1. Wet hair in sink. Place a sheet or large towel under the chair and seat the person with head lice in the chair. Remember that nits are very small so make sure that you are in a place with good lighting.
2. Dry the hair with a towel or hair dryer until it is **completely dry**. The heat will help loosen the nits from the hair.
3. **Wet the hair** again and comb out tangles with a regular tooth comb.
4. Part hair into four sections and pin with clips.
5. Pick one section. Starting at the top of this section, lift a one inch wide strand of hair and place the teeth of the nit comb as close to the

# Permethrins

These pesticides usually kill lice on contact and may continue to kill lice and newborn lice for 7-10 days.

## Permethrin cream rinses:

Nix® – 1% permethrin

Elimite™ (prescription only) – 5% permethrin

## Tips for using these products (Permethrins):

- ❖ Permethrins are the treatment of choice by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), although they report that treatment failure is common.
- ❖ Always carefully follow the instructions on any head lice treatment product.
- ❖ Do not shampoo the head for at least 24 hours after treatment.
- ❖ Do not reapply any pesticide product for at least seven days after the first pesticide treatment. Using treatment products more frequently than recommended can cause serious side effects. Remember, these are pesticides!
- ❖ Use only a baby shampoo or a regular shampoo without conditioner for 2 weeks after the lice treatment. Do not use hair coloring, mousse, gel or hair spray for at least 2 weeks after lice treatment. (See page 24 for product information.)
- ❖ When using Nix®, use the entire 2 ounce bottle on the infested head. If the person has extremely short hair, only use half the bottle. If the person has long hair, use one and a half to two bottles of Nix®.



# Pyrethrums

These pesticides usually kill lice on contact but have no long-lasting effect on lice that may hatch later.

## Pyrethrum Shampoos

Rid®  
A-200®  
Clear®  
R&C®

## Pyrethrum Cream Rinses

Pronto®  
End Lice®

### Tips for using these products (pyrethrums):

- ❖ Always carefully follow the instructions on any head lice treatment product.
- ❖ If you see lice moving 10 minutes after the treatment, don't assume the treatment didn't work. It may take up to 20 minutes after a treatment for lice to die.
- ❖ Using treatment products more often than recommended can cause serious side effects. Remember, these are pesticides!
- ❖ One treatment will not kill all of the lice. You must continue to check the hair and pick the nits. Do not reapply any pesticide product for at least seven days after the first pesticide treatment.
- ❖ Most of these products can be bought as a package with a lice spray. Evidence shows that lice sprays are not effective in killing lice or nits. They will only put poisons into the air. Save your money and avoid buying lice sprays. Instead, pick the nits!

scalp as possible. Make sure the teeth of the comb are deep into the strand of hair. Pull the nit comb through the strand of hair.

6. Nits that are difficult to remove may be scraped off by moving the nit comb up and down the hair shaft starting at the scalp.

**Wipe the comb off, with a tissue, after each stroke through the hair**

7. Pin back each section of hair after removing the nits.
8. Repeat steps 5-7 to the remaining 3 sections of hair. If the hair becomes dry, dampen with a little water.
9. After picking all the lice and nits you can see, rinse the hair with water to wash out any loose nits.
10. Dry the hair with a **clean towel** or hair dryer, then check the entire head for nits you may have missed.
11. **Pick the nits twice a day for two weeks, even if you don't see nits!**
12. Have the person who was treated change into clean clothes.

**NOTE: If you are picking nits for more than one person — pour boiling water over the nit comb, hair clips, and regular comb and let soak for 30 seconds.**

## Clean up after nit picking

- ☐ Wash the sheet or large towel that was placed below the person who was treated.
- ☐ Soak all the combs and hair clips in bleach water. See page 22 about cleaning with bleach.
- ☐ Wash all of the used towels.
- ☐ Flush all of the used tissues down the toilet or seal in a garbage bag.
- ☐ Wash any clothing the person was wearing.

## Nit combs that can help

There are many nit removing combs that you can buy. Some of these fine toothed combs come in the box of lice treatments, such as Rid® and Nix®. These combs do not seem to be effective. Two combs that work very well in the removal of nits are the LiceOut™ comb and the LiceMeister™ comb. See page 24 for more information.

## Pesticide treatment products

There are head lice treatment products called pesticides that may kill lice on contact. Pesticides are toxic products, which, if used improperly, may cause side effects. Always carefully follow the instructions on any head lice treatment product!

**ATTENTION**  
**Pregnant Women, Children under two**  
**years old, and Persons with**  
**allergies!**

**Consult your doctor before using any**  
**pesticide treatment product!**

There are currently 3 types of head lice pesticides:

1. Pyrethrums
2. Permethrins
3. Lindane

Case reports suggest that head lice are becoming increasingly resistant to pesticide products. Using several different products does not increase effectiveness but may only increase side effects. Even if you choose to use a pesticide product, you must continue to pick the nits twice a day for two weeks!



3. With the cap on, briefly blow dry the hair. The heat will help kill the lice.
4. Leave the cap on for at least 30 minutes, up to 2 hours.
5. Using a special nit removing comb, like the LiceOut™ comb or the LiceMeister™ comb, remove the lice and nits. See page 10 to find out how to pick nits.
6. Shampoo the hair. It may take more than one shampooing to remove all of the mayonnaise/oil.
7. Use the special nit removing comb to remove any remaining nits. Continue to remove nits twice a day for two weeks.

## HairClean 1-2-3™

This is a natural head and hair hygiene treatment that is pesticide-free. It contains coconut oil, anise oil, and ylang ylang oil. It has been used effectively in Israel to kill lice. A research team from the University of Miami found HairClean 1-2-3™ to be an effective non-toxic product for the treatment of head lice. Always follow the instructions on any lice treatment product. To find out where you can buy HairClean 1-2-3™ see page 24.

## Non-toxic treatments to use with nit picking

There is a wide variety of lice treatments available. Current research and community feedback suggest that some lice have become resistant to common pesticides used in treatment. In response to this, several pesticide-free treatments have been developed. Based on research and reports by school nurses, the LANCC have found the following treatments to be effective:

1. Nit loosening process
2. LiceOut™
3. Oil based treatments
4. HairClean 1-2-3™

See the following pages for details about using these treatments.





## Nit loosening process

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White vinegar can be used to loosen the nits from the hair before you begin nit picking. Soak the hair with white vinegar and then apply a damp towel that has also been soaked in the same solution. Leave the towel on the hair for 30 to 60 minutes, then begin to pick the nits.

## LiceOut™

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LiceOut™ is a non-toxic gel that washes out easily and is safe and easy to use. LiceOut™ traps lice so that nit combs, such as the LiceOut™ comb or the LiceMeister™ comb can remove lice and nits.

Always follow the instructions on any lice treatment product. See page 24 to find out where you can buy LiceOut™.

## Oil based treatments

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Oil based products such as olive oil or mayonnaise make it difficult for lice to breath. If you saturate the hair with an oil based product and leave it on the hair for more than 30 minutes, this will cause the lice to slow down. This process makes removing live lice and nits much easier. Here is how to use oil based treatments:

### What you will need:

- ☐ Olive oil or mayonnaise (do not use homemade mayonnaise, low/no fat mayonnaise, or salad dressing.)
- ☐ Shower cap or plastic wrap
- ☐ Hair dryer
- ☐ Special nit removing comb
- ☐ Regular baby shampoo or regular shampoo without: conditioner, detangler, cream rinse or oils
- ☐ Sink to wash hair in

### How to treat:

1. Cover the infested head completely with olive oil or mayonnaise.
2. Place a shower cap over the hair or wrap the hair with plastic wrap.





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